

FY2019 EPA Brownfields Bluefield Coalition Assessment Grant
 Town of Bluefield, Virginia – City of Bluefield, West Virginia – Bluefield Industrial Development Authority

1. Applicant Identification: Town of Bluefield
 112 Huffard Drive
 Bluefield, Virginia 24605

2. Funding Requested:
 - a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide Coalition
 - b. Federal Funds Requested:
 - i. \$600,000
 - ii. The Town of Bluefield is not requesting a waiver
 - c. Contamination: Hazardous (\$400,000)/Petroleum (\$200,000)

3. Location:

a. Town of Bluefield	City of Bluefield
b. Tazewell County	Mercer County
c. State of Virginia	State of West Virginia

4. Property Information for Site-specific Proposals: N/A

5. Contacts:

<u>Project Director:</u> Mike Watson Town Manager 112 Huffard Drive Bluefield, VA 24605 (276) 322-4363 watson@bluefieldva.org	<u>Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Official:</u> Don Harris Mayor 112 Huffard Drive Bluefield, VA 24605 (276) 322-4854 wdharris2@verizon.net
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6. Population:

Town of Bluefield, VA – 5,058
 City of Bluefield, WV – 10,144
 Bluefield Area Region (Tazewell, VA & Mercer, WV Counties) – 103,652
 - American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates

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7. Other Factors Checklist:

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	
The priority brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	1-2
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated floodplain.	1-2
The redevelopment of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy; or any energy efficiency improvement projects.	4
30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse planning activities for priority brownfield site(s) within the target area.	

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority: Letters from both the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection are attached.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Street address: 1111 E. Main Street, Suite 1400, Richmond, Virginia 23219

Mailing address: P.O. Box 1105, Richmond, Virginia 23218

www.deq.virginia.gov

Matthew J. Strickler
Secretary of Natural Resources

David K. Paylor
Director

(804) 698-4000
1-800-592-5482

January 17, 2019

Mike Watson
Town Manager
Town of Bluefield
112 Huffard Drive
Bluefield, VA 24605

Subject: Acknowledgement and Support
FY 2019 Brownfields Assessment Grant Proposal
Community Wide Hazardous and Petroleum Assessment Grant
EPA-OLEM-OBLR-18-06

Dear Mr. Watson:

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is in receipt of your request for support to the above referenced brownfields grant application. The request will be for a community-wide EPA Brownfields Assessment grant for the coalition of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia; City of Bluefield, West Virginia; and Bluefield Industrial Development Authority. DEQ is pleased to add our support for the subject EPA grant proposal and has been working closely with Town, City, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center, local planning districts and surrounding communities to bring much needed brownfields assistance to the area.

The Bluefield Coalition Brownfields Assessment Project will perform environmental site assessments and redevelopment planning in the Bluefield region, spanning the border of Virginia and West Virginia and within the Bluestone River Watershed. Historically heavily dependent on a coal-based economy, the Bluefield region is seeking to diversify and attract new industries. Brownfield sites are being targeted to create additional retail and entertainment space, a boutique hotel, and public park and recreational spaces. DEQ is excited to continue the partnership with this coalition, West Virginia DEP, and the numerous other partners committed to making this a success.

The DEQ Brownfields Program is pleased to provide our support for this grant proposal and feels that if successful the grant funds would play a vital role in the revitalization efforts in the target area which has been devastated by the downturn of the coal industry. It is our sincere

FY 2019 Brownfields Assessment Grant Proposal
Community Wide Hazardous and Petroleum Assessment Grant
EPA-OLEM-OBLR-18-06
January 17, 2019

hope that the subject proposal will be successful, and I look forward to continuing to work on this unique opportunity that will transform brownfields across two different communities and two states. If I can be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to call me at (804) 698-4064.

Sincerely,



Vincent A. Maiden, CPG
Brownfields Program Coordinator

cc: Dan Manweiler – DEQ-SWRO
Meade Anderson – DEQ- CO
Joe Morici – Cardno



west virginia department of environmental protection

Office of Environmental Remediation
601 57th Street SE
Charleston, WV 25304
Phone: 304-926-0455

Austin Caperton, Cabinet Secretary
dep.wv.gov

January 21, 2019

Mr. Mike Watson, Town Manager
Town of Bluefield, VA
112 Huffard Drive
Bluefield, VA 24605

Re: State Environmental Authority Acknowledgement Letter
FY19 U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant Proposal
EPA-OLEM-OBLR-18-06

Dear Mr. Watson,

Thank you for your efforts to enhance the region's environment, economy, and quality of life by applying for a U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant in partnership with the City of Bluefield, WV, and the Bluefield Industrial Development Authority, to address brownfields spanning the Virginia and West Virginia border within the Bluestone River Watershed.

This grant will provide vital funding to ensure continued economic growth in a recovering region. The Town of Bluefield, VA, and neighboring City of Bluefield, WV, have admirably adapted after the sharp decline of the region's predominantly coal-based economy; however, the abundance of abandoned and under-utilized sites spread across limited flat land is an obstacle to attracting new industries for further development and economic diversification. By inventorying properties with perceived contamination, assessing those otherwise desirable and developable properties, and planning for reuse through community engagement, the Town of Bluefield, VA, and City of Bluefield, WV, will eliminate a key barrier to redevelopment and revitalization.

This project has been an exciting endeavor for WVDEP. Our staff has enjoyed partnering with the communities, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and other stakeholders, and we look forward to seeing the results of crossing traditional geographic borders to tackle shared

challenges, maximize all available resources, and create solutions together for regional advancement.

As you prepare your application for this funding, the WVDEP Office of Environmental Remediation is in full support of your efforts. We are committed to assisting you assess, remediate, and redevelop vacant, underutilized, and contaminated properties within the Bluestone River Watershed into productive and positive new uses. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Casey E. Korbini". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Casey E. Korbini
Deputy Director for Remediation Programs

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields

i. Background and Description of Target Area: Nestled in the Appalachian Mountains and the Bluestone River watershed, two Bluefield communities – the Town in Virginia, the City in West Virginia – emerged after the largest and richest deposits of bituminous coal in the world were found. This soft burning coal fueled boilers throughout the industrial revolution of the late 1800s. As the demand for coal increased, so did the need for workers. Almost overnight, both of the Bluefield's respective populations boomed (more than 300% in one year from 1887-1888), creating two bustling communities on either side of the state border. Growth was further encouraged as the railroad presence increased in the area to transport the coal to factories in the east and mid-west. In the late 1800s, the Norfolk and Western Railroad expanded to the City of Bluefield, and the area became a major rail operations and repair hub.

Employment in the coal industry peaked in the early 1920s, then dropped precipitously. Over the last century, automation and more efficient extraction methods decreased the amount of labor required, while increasing the amount of coal produced. Then, starting in the 1950s, demand began to drop as the country focused on cleaner energy – nuclear, natural gas, and renewables. According to data from the US Department of Labor, the number of coal mining jobs are now over 85% less than their peak in 1923. The changing coal market and a series of mergers also impacted the rail industry in the area. As shipments decreased, the railroad, now known as Norfolk Southern, reduced operations in Bluefield. With the loss of employment in these two major industries, the Bluefield region suffered a significant loss of population. The combined population of the two Bluefields peaked in 1950 at 25,718. In 2017, the US Census estimated the population stood at only 14,583 – a reduction of over 43%. As the importance of both the coal and railroad industries declined, many other businesses and services in the region became unsustainable: foundries that made parts for mining and railroad equipment closed, warehouses and support shops emptied, schools consolidated as enrollment dropped, and downtown stores boarded up windows and doors as customers disappeared.

After years of decline, the Bluefield region is now trying to reverse the trends by diversifying the economy and revitalizing their downtowns. Therefore, the Bluefield Coalition, comprised of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia, the City of Bluefield, West Virginia, and the Bluefield Industrial Development Authority (IDA), will target areas in the downtowns of the two communities and areas where the topography and infrastructure are appropriate for light industrial or manufacturing industries. A common history, challenges, and watershed connect the Bluefield communities, who are now partnering to address the numerous brownfield sites created by the decline of the region's coal and rail industries.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites

Coalition partners developed a list of priority brownfield sites to facilitate one of two revitalization efforts: 1) downtown revitalization and 2) economic diversification and development of potential industrial and/or manufacturing properties.

1) Target Sites for Downtown Revitalization:

Former Bank of Graham Building, Town of Bluefield, Virginia - Located in the heart of downtown, this property is immediately adjacent to a tributary of the Bluestone River. A former banking institution for generations, the Town took ownership of the building after completing a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). The Phase 1 ESA recommended testing for asbestos-containing materials (ACM) and lead-based paint (LBP).

Former Logan Street School Building, Town of Bluefield, Virginia – Across the river and up a steep grade from the former bank building is a historic school building. The three-story structure

overlooks downtown and the Bluestone River from its perch atop the hill. Concerns regarding ACM, LBP, and potential petroleum contamination from underground storage tanks (USTs) and potential heavy metals and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) from coal usage associated with the boilers are hindering the sale and redevelopment of the property.

Spring Street Properties, Town of Bluefield, Virginia – Along Spring Street, six properties, now mostly vacant or underutilized, have had a variety of uses, including as dry-cleaners, automotive repair, warehousing, and agricultural supplies distribution. Portions of all six parcels are located in the federally designated flood plain. Concerns include dry-cleaning solvents, petroleum products, heavy metals, herbicides, pesticides, ACM, and LBP.

Art Riley Building, Town of Bluefield, Virginia – Also located downtown, this two-story building once housed a motor sales and repair shop. The owner is interested in selling the building; however, concerns of potential contamination from petroleum, solvents, heavy metals, and PCBs from past operations are hindering the sale.

Chicory Square, City of Bluefield, West Virginia – Downtown Bluefield is anchored by the ongoing development of a green space called Chicory Square. Plans are proceeding for the demolition of aging, and in some cases structurally unsound, buildings in a full square block around the existing city park. Once demolition is complete, additional soil and/or groundwater assessments may be needed to determine if impact occurred from former heating oil (petroleum) USTs and historical dry cleaners (solvents) located in the area. The park development will spur reinvestment in the area; therefore, at a minimum, additional Phase 1 ESAs and ACM and LBP surveys will be needed for the surrounding downtown properties, due to their age and past uses.

2) Target Sites for Regional Economic Diversification Properties:

Bluefield Iron and Metal, Town of Bluefield, Virginia – Immediately adjacent to both the Bluestone River and the active railroad is the former Bluefield Iron and Metal facility. A scrap metal recycling facility for decades, the Bluefield IDA acquired the property in late 2018. A Phase I ESA, completed in September 2018, revealed multiple Recognized Environmental Concerns (RECs), including concerns of heavy metals, PCBs, and petroleum releases on the site. A Phase II ESA is needed to enable redevelopment of the site for light industrial use.

Woodtech Property, Town of Bluefield, Virginia – Also adjacent to both the Bluestone River and the railroad is the former Woodtech Property, a manufacturer of hardwood laminated veneer and plywood. After closing in the early 2000s, a new owner demolished several of the building structures and utilized the remaining as storage. Potential environmental concerns include solvents, adhesives, and phenols. Six former treatment lagoons associated with the plant sit on a separate adjacent parcel.

Former Rail Property, City of Bluefield, West Virginia – Located immediately adjacent to a former freight distribution warehouse, the former Rail Property includes a spur and elevated platform that once serviced the warehouse. In addition to having environmental concerns due to its historical use by the railroad (heavy metals, PAHs, herbicides), the property is severely overgrown and a haven for illicit/illegal activities, including drug use and prostitution. Like all properties on the north side of highway US19, a tributary creek to the Bluestone River was piped underneath the property decades ago. The creek is day-lighted once it crosses the border in Virginia and joins the Bluestone River. The concerns on the site need to be addressed in order to ensure the success of transforming the adjacent former warehouse into a small business incubator (sec. 1.b.i).

City Warehouse and Bluefield Lubricants, City of Bluefield, West Virginia – On the other side of the former freight distribution warehouse are two former industrial properties: the City Warehouse and the former Bluefield Lubricants. The City Warehouse is an old historic brick warehouse structure, which has gone through a variety of uses over the years and is currently underutilized as storage for a roofing company. Bluefield Lubricant is a vacant, former oil depot with several

aboveground storage tanks (ASTs) remaining on site, and the owner is actively attempting to sell the property. Both properties have adjacent vacant parcels as well, and the piped creek runs underneath all the parcels. With the transformation of the adjacent freight warehouse, the properties have great potential for redevelopment if the petroleum, ACM, LBP, and other concerns can be addressed.

Former Car Lot, City of Bluefield, West Virginia – Across the street from the former freight distribution warehouse is a vacant lot previously home to a car sales and service business. The City acquired the site after a stormwater box built using creosote-soaked railroad ties underneath the lot failed. In addition to the concerns related to contamination from the creosote, the site's past history of automobile repair and service raise concerns of petroleum, solvents, and heavy metals.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area

i. Redevelopment Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans

The projected redevelopments of the target sites for the Bluefield Coalition Area align with two specific goals for land use and revitalization in the region:

1) Downtown Revitalization:

In an effort to place more workers and create new businesses in the downtown, the Bluefield IDA recently acquired the *Former Bank of Graham Building*. The IDA will lease the second floor office space to a tenant (secured), while the first floor space will be provided to the winner of the Community Launch Event – a competition for local entrepreneurs to ‘launch’ a business. A winner will be chosen after the top five proposals pitch their idea to the community and will receive a three-year lease for \$1. In order to attract more visitors, the *Former Logan Street School Building* can be converted into a boutique hotel. Currently, the Town has no hotels. In order to attract more retail stores, restaurants, and entertainment venues, additional commercial spaces are needed. In 2006, a flood mitigation project demolished and converted several buildings to greenspace along the tributary. While successful in addressing flooding concerns, the mitigation decreased the amount of available downtown commercial space. The repurposing of the six *Spring Street Properties* and the first floor of the *Art Riley Building* will help fill this void. Due to the local topography, the second floor of the *Art Riley Building* has street level access on Depot Street, and the Town envisions a senior center to serve the community and attract more visitors to the downtown. In the City of Bluefield, students from the Virginia Tech School of Landscape Architecture worked with the community to develop concepts for the future of *Chicory Square*, which once improved will encourage the redevelopment of the surrounding downtown buildings. This brownfields project will enable the Town, the IDA, and the community to build upon previous plans and current efforts to encourage the redevelopment of these sites and create an updated, overarching Downtown Revitalization Plan as a guide for the future.

2) Regional Economic Diversification:

The natural topography of the region limits the availability of large, flat parcels suitable for light industry and/or manufacturing; therefore, the IDA must focus on the redevelopment of brownfield sites with existing needed utilities and infrastructure, such as the former *Bluefield Iron and Metal* with nearly 10 acres and rail access, and the *Woodtech Property* with 13 acres and rail access. In the City of Bluefield, under a concept called CREATE (Creating Resilient Economies by Assisting Transforming Entrepreneurs), the former freight distribution warehouse is being transformed with \$2.5 million into the Commercialization Station (anticipated opening in March 2019), a business incubator for manufacturing entrepreneurs. Partners will work together to provide the resources and expertise needed (such as mentoring) to grow fledgling businesses in the former brownfield. Redevelopment of the adjacent, blighted *Former Rail Property* will improve access to the incubator site and provide greenspace for improved aesthetics and use by building occupants. As they outgrow and graduate from the incubator, the companies will be transplanted to new locations within the

community. Brownfield properties adjacent to the incubator, such as the *City Warehouse*, *Bluefield Lubricants*, and *Former Car Lot* properties, will be redeveloped to provide space for these new businesses to grow and flourish.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Redevelopment Strategy

The eventual redevelopment of the targeted sites will stimulate economic development in the Bluefield Coalition region by putting a significant amount of currently underutilized or vacant buildings and acreage back into productive reuse, attracting capital investment, and increasing property values, employment, and tax revenues. For example, the conversion of the *Former Logan Street School Building* into a boutique hotel may attract a similar investment as the \$7.8 million invested in the 27-room Western Front Hotel in nearby St. Paul, Virginia. A company locating on the *Bluefield Iron and Metal* site could create 75 new jobs with an investment of \$1.4 million, based on a recent similar local expansion by manufacturer PEMCO. Based on the current assessed value of a nearby occupied facility, a manufacturer moving into the *City Warehouse* building would potentially increase its assessed value from the current \$37,500 to over \$300,000 or the assessed value on the *Bluefield Lubricants* property to grow from \$76,700 to over \$610,000, significantly increasing the City's tax revenue. As the businesses outgrow the Commercialization Station space incubator, new entrepreneurs will move in, continuing a growing cycle of economic stimulation. Expansion of the manufacturing and industrial sectors is a catalyst for an upward wage trend as regional businesses compete for workforce, thus driving overall economic growth of the region. The growth and investment in these brownfields will spur other local businesses, such as restaurants, coffee shops, and various shops, to open in the adjacent and downtown areas.

Additional greenspace is already envisioned for the *Former Rail Property*, and improvements to the Town's greenspace and the City's Chicory Square will be supported by the redevelopment planning tasks of the project. The renovation of structures on the brownfield sites will improve their energy efficiency, and many of the proposed manufacturing buildings have large amounts of rooftop space that can be fitted with solar panels to provide clean, cheap energy to the occupants.

c. **Strategy for Leveraging Resources**

i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse

As municipalities and a governmental authority, the coalition partners are eligible for multiple funding sources, but often the environmental assessments need to be completed to unlock investments in brownfield sites. This project will enable the partners to continue to seek and secure funding from other governmental agencies and private foundations. For example, the Commercialization Station received \$2.04 million from the Economic Development Administration and \$510,000 from the Shott Foundation, a private local foundation. Acquisition of and demolition of properties in Chicory Square (approximately \$3 million) is also being funded by grants from a private foundation, and preliminary concepts for the square leveraged support from Virginia Tech students. For Town or IDA sites, funds from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfield Planning (up to \$50,000) and Remediation (up to \$500,000) grants will be leveraged to assist with additional site assessments and/or cleanup. The Virginia sites qualify for investments from Opportunity Zone funds. EPA Brownfields Cleanup grants, Enterprise Zone Real Property Improvement Grants, Virginia Department of Health and Community Development Industrial Revitalization Fund grants, and Community Development Block Grants can also be leveraged.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure

Existing water, sewer, and electricity services at the targeted sites are of the needed size and capacity to be re-used for the planned redevelopments. High speed, fiber internet connections are available, and several target sites have rail access. No additional infrastructure is needed.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. Community Need

i. The Community's Need for Funding

The Bluefield region has been experiencing a significant population decline since the 1980s, with a 15% decrease in the Town of Bluefield (5,946 total population in 1980 to 5,058 in 2017) and a 38% decrease in the City of Bluefield (16,060 total population in 1980 to 9,869 in 2017).¹ The decrease in coal production and associated jobs across the targeted area has taken a significant toll on the economy of the region, as the region produces only ½ the coal it produced ten years ago. A report issued by the King Institute for Regional Economic Studies found that the layoffs resulting from the substitution of cheaper natural gas for coal resulted in a 33-million-ton decline in 2012 alone. This, in turn, caused a devastating blow (directly) to miners and (indirectly) to the industries supporting mining. “Each coal mining job supports 1.27 jobs in other sectors of the region’s economy. The loss of 100 coal mining jobs would lead to 127 jobs being lost in all other industries, for a total loss of 227 jobs. For each dollar in earnings paid directly to households employed in the coal mining industry, 64 cents in earnings are generated for households employed in all other industries. Stated another way, for every \$100 loss in earnings paid to coal miners, households employed in all other industries lose \$64 in earnings, for a total loss of \$164.”² Unemployment rates across the Bluefield region are indicative of the weak economy, with 7.5% unemployed in the Town and 6.5% unemployed in the City (www.bestplaces.net). With challenging economic conditions and a small, decreasing population base, the Bluefield region is unable to draw on other sources of funding for these brownfield sites. This project will help attract private and public investment to the region by clarifying the complicated environmental issues associated with the priority sites. The project will also help the region create overarching plans to ensure the revitalization happens in a sustainable manner consistent with the community needs.

All three coalition partners are small entities with limited staff and resources. As a coalition, the partners can better serve the community by creating a successful regional brownfield program. Ultimately, the brownfields project will help facilitate the economic diversification that the Bluefield region needs to transition from the coal and railway industries to advanced manufacturing and local entrepreneurial development.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

“Bluefield’s population is one that is aging – 16% of residents are over 70, and 28% are Baby Boomers (51-60) who will soon be retiring. Comparatively, the generations that will be supporting the Baby Boomers – the Gen Xers (35-49) and the Millennials (19-34) – comprise only 15% and 19% of the population, respectively.”³ The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program measures vital welfare factors to rank counties across the United States. Their 2018 rankings report revealed that the two counties (municipal-level data not available) that encompass the Bluefield region are some of the unhealthiest counties in each state. Out of the 133 counties in Virginia, Tazewell County ranked at 118; while in West Virginia, Mercer County ranked 50 out of 55. The aging and low-income population of the region is especially susceptible to impacts to their health and welfare from the environmental contaminants suspected to be present on the priority sites. By encouraging the redevelopment of brownfield properties, this project will not only help mitigate potential

¹ U.S. Census Data, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2017-5 year estimate data sets

² Economic Impacts of Job Losses in the Coal Mining Industry. (2013, February). King University School of Business, King Institute for Regional Economic Studies, Paper No. 7

³ Bluefield, WV’s Cool & Connected Action Plan: Community Driven Strategies for Leveraging Broadband to Catalyze Downtown Revitalization (2017).

environmental exposure but may also help facilitate the creation of a senior center (*Art Riley Building*) to serve the aging population.

The vacant and often derelict state of the brownfield sites pose safety concerns, as the abandoned and overgrown sites are often havens for illicit activities, such as reported on the *Former Rail Property*. Crime is a significant challenge for the welfare of the Bluefield region. According to the Neighborhood Scout database (www.neighborhoodscout.com), the Town ranks 14 on a total crime scale of 1 to 100 (with 100 being the safest). The City also faces challenges with crime, ranking 11 on a total crime scale of 1 to 100 (with 100 being safest). This project will help the region reduce crime rates by beginning the process to facilitate the assessment, eventual clean up, and redevelopment of the priority sites.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions

Many of the residents of the Bluefield region have lived their entire lives in the area, resulting in long-term potential exposure to carcinogens on brownfields, mining and railroad operations, and other environmental concerns. Thus, the cancer mortality rate (see table) is significantly higher in the region, where the counties have a higher rate of overall premature deaths (measures mortality by giving more weight to deaths at earlier ages than deaths at later ages). As the following table also shows, both counties in the Bluefield region have higher incidences of Lung and Esophagus cancers than their respective states and the U.S. The suspected contaminants on the priority sites include PAHs linked to lung cancers and solvents linked to esophagus cancers, among others.

	Tazewell County	Virginia	Mercer County	West Virginia	U.S.
Incidence Rate of Lung Cancers ⁴	68.8	58.9	84.8	80.3	60.2
Incidence Rate of Esophagus Cancers ⁵	6.3	4.3	7.8	5.4	4.6
Premature Death – Years of Potential Life Lost Rate ⁵	10,700	6,100	12,600	9,800	5,300

According to the Virginia Department of Health, the Age-Adjusted Rate per 10,000 for Adult Hospitalizations Due to Asthma in Tazewell County was nearly double that of Virginia (17 vs. 9). In Mercer County, the population has an elevated percentage of adults with asthma (11.1%) compared to West Virginia (8.7%).⁶ Exposure to airborne particulates, such as wind-blown contaminated soils and asbestos from the priority brownfield sites, may contribute to and/or complicate asthma and other respiratory diseases in the target community. Recent data for birth defects in the counties is unavailable, but older data suggests an average or lower rate of birth defects in the area. The assessment and eventual remediation and redevelopment of these properties will reduce the targeted community's exposure risk to the suspected contaminants and help lower the incidence of cancers, cancer mortality rates, premature deaths, and complications with asthma in the Bluefield region.

(3) Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations

Data from the 2017 American Community Survey indicate an economically impoverished area. In the City, 25% of individuals and 34% of families with children live below the poverty threshold, while the median household income is only \$33,510 compared to \$44,061 for West Virginia and \$57,652 for the US. In the Town, the median household income is \$44,010 compared to \$68,766 for Virginia. Home values in the Bluefield region are depressed compared to the respective state medians (\$76,600 median home price in the City vs. \$111,600 in WV; \$125,100 in the Town vs. \$255,800 in

⁴ National Cancer Institute. State Cancer Profiles. 2011-2015.

⁵ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>, accessed January 2019.

⁶ West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Public Health Statistics Center. West Virginia Asthma Burden Report 2007-2010.

VA). Additionally, approximately 1/3 of homes across the Bluefield region are rentals.

According to recent (2017) research out of the University of Virginia, rural Appalachia, including the Bluefield region, is disproportionately impacted by environmental health issues and the resulting health outcomes. Cancer incidence has declined in much of the country since 1969 — but not in rural Appalachia. Here, the cancer mortality rate is 19% higher than it is for urban, non-Appalachian people in the rest of the country. People in much of rural Appalachia are more likely to die within three to five years of their diagnoses than those in urban areas across the U.S.⁷ Researchers point to economic, social, and environmental factors, including the historic heavy industrial, mining, and rail operations in the area, as reasons behind the disparities. Widespread poverty and lack of education make it difficult to overcome these barriers, which the Bluefield region has been battling for decades. This project will help address some of those challenges, by encouraging the redevelopment of brownfield sites to mitigate health risks, diversify the economy, and create jobs for the region.

b. Community Engagement

i. Community Involvement: Community Project Partners

Partner Name	Point of contact (name, email & phone)	Specific role in the project
Bluefield VA Downtown Stakeholders Group	Savanah Corbin, Administrator cornerstonegift@gmail.com 276-322-3682	Participate on Community Advisory Committee (CAC); encourage community and business support; identify sites; participate in redevelopment planning
Bluefield WV Downtown Merchants Association	Art Riley, President motorman1932@yahoo.com 304-320-7327	Participate on CAC; encourage community and business support; identify sites; participate in redevelopment planning
Bluestone Conservancy	Roger Angles wr_angles@yahoo.com	Participate on CAC; disseminate information; identify sites impacting the Bluestone Watershed
Rotary Club of Bluefield, VA	Steve Lilly, Rotary Representative ESLILLY@fcbinc.com	Participate on CAC; invite project team to speak at regular meeting; help disseminate info; encourage participation
Rotary Club of Bluefield, WV	Marie Blackwell, City Ambassador marie.blackwell@cityofbluefield.com 304.888.1718	Participate on CAC; invite project team to speak at regular meeting; help disseminate info; encourage participation
Kiwanis Club of Mercer County	Dr. Jo-Ann Robinson, President jrobinson@bluefieldstate.edu 304.327.4567	Participate on CAC; invite project team to speak at regular meeting; help disseminate info; encourage participation
Chamber of Commerce of the Two Virginias	Josh Cline, President josh@bluefieldchamber.com 304.327.7184	Participate on CAC; encourage participation; identify sites; participate in redevelopment planning; recruit businesses to brownfield sites

In addition, the project will be supported by area institutions of higher learning, the county governments, the planning districts, and other stakeholders not listed due to limited space.

In order to involve the community and incorporate public support in the project, an overall Steering Committee will be formed to include representatives appointed by each Coalition partner. The Steering Committee will meet quarterly to review the project progress, ensure project alignment with community interests and needs, promote the project to the overall Bluefield region, and communicate with the project staff. The representatives for each Coalition partner will lead a separate Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for their target community (the Town, the City, and the IDA). The CACs will be comprised of representatives of each community (residents, business leaders, stakeholders.) and will also meet quarterly to review the site inventory and prioritize sites for assessment, discuss redevelopment plans, invite public comment, and solicit feedback for their target community. The priorities of the CACs will be taken to the Steering Committee, where the

representatives will make project decisions to ensure community needs are met and project funds serve each community and member of the Coalition.

ii. **Incorporating Community Input**

While the CACs will serve as the main conduit for disseminating information and encouraging public participation, the project team will also hold public meetings and visioning workshops within the community, particularly for the development of revitalization plans. Coalition partners plan to capitalize on previous outreach successes, learn from these methods, and employ similar sessions in their own communities. For example, during development of the City's Cool and Connected Action Plan, a significant amount of public participation took place over a two-day period. In March 2017, 42 residents of the community came together to discuss sustainable community development patterns and economic trends, and then worked in small groups to distill ideas and priorities into an overarching community vision.

Public participation will be encouraged throughout the duration of the project. With a large elderly and poor population, easily accessible, low-tech communication methods will be most effective. Therefore, in addition to social media and website updates and presentations to the Town and City Councils and IDA Board, the Steering Committee will distribute information via local church bulletins, newspaper press releases, brochures/flyers, and presentations to neighborhood groups to communicate progress. Coalition partners will maintain meeting sign-in sheets for follow-up communication, public comments and input will be considered and incorporated (if applicable) into the project, and all public comments/inquiries will be addressed by the CACs and/or Steering Committee, and responded to by the project team in a timely manner.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

a. Description of Tasks and Activities

The Bluefield Coalition is prepared to complete the following tasks within the three years:

TASK 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING – As lead of the Bluefield Coalition, the Town will be responsible for all project management, oversight, and reporting requirements to the EPA. With assistance from the selected consultant, the Town will complete all required EPA reporting forms (quarterly reports, DBE, and financial status) and update the ACRES database. The Town will meet monthly with the project team to ensure project goals are met and tasks remain on schedule to be completed within the three-year period of performance. Representatives from each coalition partner may attend regional and national training events.

TASK 2: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - The Steering Committee will lead public involvement efforts with support from the selected consultant. Anticipated items include development of a community involvement plan (1), updates to social media and websites (at least quarterly), project information sheets (2), a project brochure (1), articles for publication (3), CAC and Steering Committee Meetings (at least 12 each), public meetings (at least 2), and meetings with individual property owners and/or developers. The community involvement plan will be completed in the 1st quarter and define the timing of all other community outreach activities.

TASK 3: SITE ASSESSMENT - The consultant, a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), will conduct environmental site assessments on the sites inventoried and prioritized by the CACs and Steering Committee. Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) conducted under this project will be performed by the QEP and in accordance with ASTM Standard E1527-13 and the EPA All Appropriate Inquiry (AAI) Final Rule. Phase II ESAs will be conducted by the QEP in accordance with ASTM E1903-11. Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) and Lead-Based Paint (LBP) Surveys will also be completed, as needed, as well as Endangered Species Surveys and Cultural/Historical Resource Surveys. Prior to any Phase II ESA, a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP), and Health and Safety Plan (HSP) will be prepared by QEP and reviewed

and approved by EPA, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ), and/or West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP), as applicable. Phase I ESAs will begin in the 2nd quarter and continue through the 8th quarter; while Phase II ESAs and other surveys will begin in the 3rd quarter and continue through the 9th quarter.

TASK 4: CLEANUP AND REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING - Subsequent to assessment activities, the QEP will lead the development of remediation and cleanup plans on sites determined to be the highest priority. These activities will include the development of an Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) or asbestos abatement plans, which will begin in the 4th quarter and continue through the 10th quarter. In addition, we anticipate the development of a Downtown Revitalization Plan for the Town (starting in the 2nd quarter) and individual Site Reuse Assessments for six additional priority sites (to be determine by the CACs and Steering Committee), which will begin in the 4th quarter and continue through the 10th quarter.

b. Cost Estimates and Outputs

The following costs and anticipated outputs were estimated based on information from other communities that have recently received EPA brownfield grants:

PROPOSED BUDGET TABLE

Budget Categories	Tasks (Hazardous)					Tasks (Petroleum)				
	1	2	3	4	Total \$	1	2	3	4	Total \$
Travel	12,000				12,000	6,000				6,000
Supplies		2,000			2,000		1,000			1,000
Contractual	14,200	18,800	245,800	107,200	386,000	7,100	9,400	122,900	53,600	193,000
Total	26,200	20,800	245,800	107,200	400,000	13,100	10,400	122,900	53,600	200,000

TASK 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING:

Travel Costs: 6 staff attend 3 regional workshops (6x3x\$500/person); 6 staff attend national conference (6x\$1,500/person) = \$18,000.

Contractual Costs: 36 project team meetings (36x\$325); 12 Quarterly Reports (12x\$250); 3 annual reports (3x\$100); 1 final summary report (\$3,300); quarterly ACRES updates (12x\$250) = \$21,300.

Outputs: 12 Quarterly Reports, 3 DBE reports, 3 FSRs, 1 Final Summary Report.

TASK 2: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

Supplies Costs: Presentation materials, printing costs (12x\$250) = \$3,000.

Contractual Costs: Community Involvement Plan (\$4,500); CAC meetings (12x\$750); Steering Committee meetings (12x\$750); project information sheets (2x\$300), project brochure (1x\$900), articles for publication (3x\$400); quarterly media updates (12x\$250) = \$28,200.

Outputs: 1 CIP, 12 CAC Meetings, 12 Steering Committee Meetings, 2 Project Information Sheets, 1 Brochure, 3 Articles, 12 Media Updates.

TASK 3: SITE ASSESSMENT:

Contractual Costs: Phase I ESAs (12x\$3,500); QAPPs, SAPs, HSPs, & Phase II ESAs (8x\$35,000); ACM & LBP surveys (10x\$4,100); Endangered Species or Cultural Resources surveys (3x\$1,900) = \$368,700.

Outputs: 12 Phase I ESA reports, 8 QAPPs, 8 SAPs, 8 HSPs, 8 Phase II ESA reports, 10 ACM & LBP surveys, 3 Endangered Species or Cultural Resources surveys.

TASK 4: CLEANUP AND REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING:

Contractual Costs: ABCAs or ACM Abatement Plans (8x\$3,100); Downtown Revitalization Plan (1x\$64,000); Site Reuse Assessments (6x\$12,000) = \$160,800.

Outputs: 8 ABCAs, 1 Downtown Revitalization Plan, 6 Site Reuse Assessments.

c. Measuring Environmental Results

The Town (as lead applicant) will hold monthly conference calls with the project team to review

progress and take corrective actions, when necessary, to ensure the funds are expended in an efficient and timely manner. The CACs and Steering Committee will meet quarterly to review community priorities, address any community concerns, and guide the project. The Town (as lead applicant) will submit Quarterly Reports, detailing the outputs and outcomes of the project, and enter and track site-specific information in the online ACRES database. At a minimum, outputs to be tracked include the number of CAC and Steering Committee meetings, public meetings, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and redevelopment plans; and, the outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability

i. Organizational Structure

The Bluefield Coalition is comprised of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia, as the Lead Applicant; the City of Bluefield, West Virginia; and, the Bluefield Industrial Development Authority. Mr. Mike Watson, Town Manager, will serve as the Project Manager and will be responsible for overseeing all grant activities and funds, submitting all required reports to EPA, and ensuring all project activities are in accordance with the work plan and the terms and conditions of the work plan. Mr. Watson has served as the Town Manager for nearly 10 years and is responsible for the operations of the Town. He has a Masters of Business Administration from King College and a Bachelor of Science degree from Bluefield State College. He will be assisted by Ms. Billie Roberts, Community Development Coordinator, and Ms. Vicki Quesenberry, Bookkeeper.

The Coalition partners will appoint representatives to serve on a Steering Committee to help guide the project, determine priorities based upon input from the CACs, and ensure each community's goals are met. At a minimum, at least one site assessment will be conducted in each partner community.

ii. Acquiring Additional Resources

The Town followed the procedures detailed in 2 CFR 200 and EPA's rule at 2 CFR 1500 to procure a brownfields consultant to provide support when the grant is awarded. The Town released a competitive, public Request for Qualifications and selected the team deemed most qualified. A contract with the selected firm will be negotiated once the Town is notified of the grant award. The selected firm will provide technical and programmatic support for all aspects of the proposed project. The Town can follow a similar process if additional resources are needed.

b. Past Performance and Accomplishments

ii. The Town has not previously received an EPA Brownfields Grant.

(1) Purpose and Accomplishments

Previous Grant Management Experience

Date	Awarding Agency	Amount	Accomplishments	Specific Outputs And Outcomes
2015	VDOT	\$320,000	Paving of high traffic count roads in Bluefield, VA.	18,516 yd ² of paved surface on College Avenue.
2015	VDOT	\$1,200,00	Eliminate congestion and address safety concerns in a busy corridor.	Routing of Hwy 460 with the addition of a left turn lane onto West Cumberland Road.
2018	VA Dept. of Rail and Public Transportation	\$130,000	Provide for deviated/fixed route services.	Replace buses, provide transportation services.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements

The Town met all of the requirements and conditions of the grant funding described above, including constant and open communication with the granting agencies project managers, completing the projects according to the work plans and schedules, achieving and reporting the expected results, and submitting all required reports in a timely manner.

THRESHOLD CRITERIA for ASSESSMENT GRANTS

1. Applicant Eligibility

The Bluefield Coalition is a partnership of Virginia and West Virginia governmental units located in Tazewell County, Virginia, and Mercer County, West Virginia. The Town of Bluefield, Virginia, is the lead member and sponsor of this application and is defined by EPA as a General Purpose Unit of Local Government under 2 CFR 200.64.

- The City of Bluefield, West Virginia, is a coalition member and is defined by EPA as a General Purpose Unit of Local Government under 2 CFR 200.64.
- The Bluefield Industrial Development Authority is a coalition member and is defined by EPA as a General Purpose Unit of Local Government under 2 CFR 200.64.

Letters demonstrating each coalition member's support of this initiative are included as attachments.

2. Community Involvement

In order to involve the community and incorporate public support in the project, an overall Steering Committee will be formed to include representatives appointed by each Coalition partner. The Steering Committee will meet quarterly to review the project progress, ensure project alignment with community interests and needs, promote the project to the overall Bluefield region, and communicate with the project staff. The representatives for each Coalition partner will lead a separate Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for their target community (the Town, the City, and the IDA). The CACs will be comprised of representatives of each community (residents, business leaders, stakeholders.) and will also meet quarterly to review the site inventory and prioritize sites for assessment, discuss redevelopment plans, invite public comment, and solicit feedback for their target community. The priorities of the CACs will be taken to the Steering Committee, where the representatives will make project decisions to ensure community needs are met and project funds serve each community and member of the Coalition.

3. Expenditure of Grant Funds

The Town of Bluefield, Virginia, does not have an active EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant.



CITY OF BLUEFIELD

Nature's Air Conditioned City

January 30, 2019

Mike Watson, Town Manager
Town of Bluefield
112 Huffard Drive
Bluefield, VA 24605

Re: EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant Dear

Mike:

This letter affirms the City of Bluefield, West Virginia, will participate as a member of the Bluefield Coalition. The City supports the submittal of an application for an EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant with the Town of Bluefield, Virginia, as the lead applicant. The City of Bluefield is an independent city in the State of West Virginia and is a general purpose unit of local government as defined in 2 CFR 200.64.

Chartered under West Virginia state law in 1889, the City of Bluefield grew with the discovery of coal deposits. The coal, and later railroad, industries have been major economic drivers for the entire region, and the decline of the sector has significantly impacted businesses and residents of the City. The economic downturn, changing market conditions, and population decreases have resulted in the creation of brownfield sites that are having a negative impact on our community. The City is now working to revitalize our downtown and surrounding area to diversify our economy by encouraging the growth of advanced manufacturing in the region. The Bluefield Coalition Brownfields Project will help us transform the brownfield sites for the benefit of the community. The City of Bluefield's Community and Economic Development (CED) will actively participate in the project and Mr. Jim Spencer, CED Director, will be our point of contact.

We look forward to being an active participant in the Bluefield Coalition.

Sincerely,

Ron Martin, Mayor
City of Bluefield
Ron.martin@cityofbluefield.com



**TOWN OF BLUEFIELD
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

January 30, 2019

Mike Watson, Town Manager
Town of Bluefield
112 Huffard Drive
Bluefield, VA 24605

Re: EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant

Dear Mike:

This letter affirms the Bluefield Industrial Development Authority (IDA) will participate as a member of the Bluefield Coalition. The IDA supports the submittal of an application for an EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant with the Town of Bluefield as the lead applicant. The IDA is a quasi-governmental economic industrial development authority established by the Virginia Code of Law. The IDA supports the economic and commercial development of the region in an effort to promote industry and develop trade, and induce manufacturing, industrial, governmental, nonprofit, and commercial enterprises to locate in or remain in the region.

The IDA is aggressively pursuing opportunities to enhance the quality of life for citizens of the Bluefield region through diversification of industries. Being a mountainous region, Bluefield has a limited number of properties of sufficient size and flat topography for industry; therefore, the reuse of brownfield sites is needed to continue promote economic development in the area. This Bluefield Coalition brownfields project will complement our economic diversification efforts by preparing existing properties for light industrial and manufacturing use.

We look forward to being an active participant in the Bluefield Coalition.

Sincerely,

W. David Bowers
Chairman
Bluefield Industrial Development Authority
276-322-4626

Bluefield Coalition:
VA-09
WV-03

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 1. Type of Submission:

- ☒ Preapplication
☐ Application
☐ Changed/Corrected Application

* 2. Type of Application:

- ☒ New
☐ Continuation
☐ Revision

* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):

* Other (Specify):

* 3. Date Received:

01/30/2019

4. Applicant Identifier:

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:

5b. Federal Award Identifier:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:

7. State Application Identifier:

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

* a. Legal Name:

Town of Bluefield, Virginia

* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):

546001151

* c. Organizational DUNS:

0959349230000

d. Address:

* Street1:

112 Huffard Drive

Street2:

* City:

Bluefield

County/Parish:

* State:

VA: Virginia

Province:

* Country:

USA: UNITED STATES

* Zip / Postal Code:

246050000

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:

Division Name:

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:

Mr .

* First Name:

Mike

Middle Name:

* Last Name:

Watson

Suffix:

Title:

Town Manager

Organizational Affiliation:

* Telephone Number:

(276) 322-4363

Fax Number:

* Email:

watson@bluefieldva.org

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:

C: City or Township Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

* 10. Name of Federal Agency:

Environmental Protection Agency

11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

66.818

CFDA Title:

Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Cooperative Agreements

* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:

EPA-OLEM-OBLR-18-06

* Title:

FY19 GUIDELINES FOR BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT GRANTS

13. Competition Identification Number:

Title:

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:

Bluefield Brownfields Assessment Coalition

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments

Delete Attachments

View Attachments

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**16. Congressional Districts Of:*** a. Applicant * b. Program/Project

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

17. Proposed Project:* a. Start Date: * b. End Date: **18. Estimated Funding (\$):**

* a. Federal	<input type="text" value="600,000.00"/>
* b. Applicant	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* c. State	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* d. Local	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* e. Other	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* f. Program Income	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* g. TOTAL	<input type="text" value="600,000.00"/>

*** 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

- ☐ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on .
- ☒ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.
- ☐ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

*** 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**☐ Yes ☒ No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)**

☒ ** I AGREE

** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

Authorized Representative:

Prefix: * First Name:

Middle Name:

* Last Name:

Suffix:

* Title: * Telephone Number: Fax Number: * Email: * Signature of Authorized Representative: * Date Signed: